

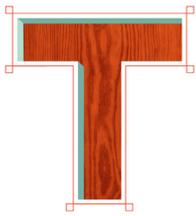


LIBRARY MANIFESTO

Issue 02 July 2010

issue 2

CONTRIBUTORS



This is the summer issue of library manifesto. We were waiting for the state budget to be settled before publishing because there were and still are so many unanswered questions about what the fate of public libraries will be in the coming years. Turns out, over 130,000 people wrote to City Hall, expressing their support for library funding in the new budget. The cuts are expected to be less devastating than they might have been, but we're still concerned.

Many attended the Brooklyn Public Library Grand Army Plaza Read-in, an undoubtedly cool event, for which the words "We will not be silenced" were plastered over facebook. "Libraries are not luxuries" appears now on the NYPL website. Slightly more catchy than "You can close our libraries when you step over our cold, beaten bodies, chained to the doors." But these are not just protest slogans, these are a sign of transformation of the public libraries. Libraries are recognizing their assets, and more importantly, listening to a younger generation of librarians and patrons. This can only lead to a stronger library system once we get out of this mess.

And so the summer issue is now available, and we all breathe a cumulative sigh of relief. In this issue, you will find some articles which we don't want to categorize, but which, if we had to categorize, we would label as self-improvement. And isn't that kind of what summer is all about? Mental health breaks, summer reading lists, vitamin D in excess, summer means giving yourself a break and recharging your batteries for the rest of the hectic year. It's about re-branding yourself, like the public libraries are, and being better off for it. We don't want to say that you owe it to yourself to read Library Manifesto, but you kinda do.

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Mission Statement:
Work hard, play lightly.

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Mission Statement:
To promote by example: shooting your mouth off, librarian-2-librarian sharing, and battling the Legion of Doom.

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Love it or Leave it

by Clair Segal

There are those who sit in class and don't say anything. When you ask them why they're getting into library sciences, they can't give a reason beyond a steady paycheck and time to work on a novel. They work in a library right now and resent having to learn to set up a gaming console, or turn on a computer, or direct a patron. They're nice folks, and I respect that they're here doing the same work that I'm doing and paying the same tuition, but beyond that I want you all out.

You hear me? Get out.

That job you're going to take could go to someone who will improve their library community. That patron you're going to try and resist helping could have a fantastic experience with someone who's passionately interested in their needs. Your library could be bettered, your community could be supported, your patrons could be nurtured—by someone who isn't you. I feel passionate about this profession. I love this. Library science is my field, it's where I want to be, and when you so obviously couldn't give a rat's posterior about patron service, improving user experiences, spreading information and freedom of speech and outreach and all of the things I have my fist firmly planted in the air for, you're not just useless. You're a hindrance.

I love this. And if you don't, I don't need you getting in my way or taking up a job that could be filled by someone who is passionate about helping people and encouraging knowledge. People who enter a high service job and have no desire to be there give the rest of us a bad name and a bad taste in our mouths.

So if you don't want to be here? Get the hell out of my profession.



INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIES: EYE ON COLOMBIA



by Segundo Pantoja

I went to Colombia with the intention of learning about the influence of religion and the place of religious institutions, especially the Catholic Church, in contemporary Colombian society. Through my research I learned about that and much more concerning a nation. I arrived in Colombia in the midst of an electoral campaign to decide who was to succeed President Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010). One of the questions in my mind was what kind of role, if any, religion could be playing in the current electoral politics of the country. I searched high and low for clues on churches' participation in the political process and the importance voters ascribed to the religious factor in their political thinking. Daily interaction with ordinary citizens, exposure to the media, including the Internet, and library research were my main sources of information. Spurred by the need to trace the role of religion in people's lives as well as in the electoral process led me to explore the historical antecedents which might shed light on the present.

I have been working in Cali, the third largest city, and though there is a major public library there, its holdings are dismally scarce on the topics of my interest. I decided to travel to the country's capital; a distance of about 350 miles, and my effort was rewarded: The country's best libraries are located in Bogotá; one more sign of the high degree of centralization in the country; the allocation of resources to education and culture is highly skewed in Colombia, and in these areas local governments have to fend for themselves, for the national government's priorities are elsewhere, like in security and transportation. In Bogotá I found plenty of relevant materials. The libraries are equipped adequately with current information technology, like online catalogues, and staffed with efficient and helpful librarians. Some of the libraries are open seven days a week and from 8AM to 8PM. Recently, the Library and Cultural Center Julio Mario Santodomingo, the latest addition to Bogotá's model public library system, was inaugurated. This cultural complex is touted as the largest library, not only in Bogotá, but also in South America

(<http://www.esbogota.com/en/node/3154/t570>).

The Luis Angel Arango Library is another major research center

(<http://www.lablaa.org/biblioareas culturales.htm>).

My word of advice for anybody considering the possibility of investigating in Colombia is to explore in advance the online catalogues of the various libraries, and then budget enough time and money for travel to the capital from wherever you are doing fieldwork.

Ephemeral No More: LOC Archives Twitter

by Mark Bergen

For a brief moment, the U.S. Library of Congress was a viral hit. The historic institution suddenly became an Internet celebrity when the news broke that it would accept into its esteemed fold the entirety of Twitter. The Library made the announcement, appropriately, on its Twitter feed. Apparently, overwhelmed with their staggering tower of tweets (a noun, but also a verb), Twitter approached the Library for help. This will be, as the project's director Martha Anderson told *The American Prospect*, the Library's first time working with a "whole corpus of material from a source."

Twitter is, for you luddites, a microblogging site and irrepressible cultural force. A small hiccup in the Library's Herculean effort may be that a majority of the site's content, produced voraciously by its 100 million plus users, is banal. So archival work will attempt to highlight significant e-missives, like the first tweet from Twitter's co-founder and the message from @BarackObama following the 2008 election. "Individually tweets might seem insignificant," a Library staffer wrote on its blog, "but viewed in the aggregate, they can be a resource for future generations to understand life in the 21st century." The project marks, according to Anderson, a welcome shift in library science from relationships with publishers to the content-generators themselves. For the project, the Library is partnering with math whizzes to make delving through the flowing sea of pixels easier. And, of course, any future researcher can now find the pulsing zeitgeist of the 21st century. Just search for Justin Bieber.



I SURVIVED MY THESIS AND SO CAN YOU : A SORT-OF HOW-TO

by Clair Segal

Back when my thesis was still in the hazy “Oh, I had to write a problem statement today! Lulz!” phase, I got some very sage advice from a former professor of mine.

“Padawan,*” she said, “There is no ‘perfect.’ Just get it done. Don’t agonize over it. Just get it done.”

I was high and mighty and full of bravado. Pshaw, I thought to myself privately. I’m doing something I’m passionate about, and I can bullshit my way through an essay so smooth you’d think I was hiding Jedi Mindtricks in the semicolons. I got this down like Charlie Brown, and that’s all there is to it.

Oh, how the mighty and stupid have fallen.

Sixty-eight pages. Sixty-eight pages later, and I waved my white flag.

“You win, Thesis!” I shouted at my laptop screen, waving my first dramatically to underscore my impotent rage. “Thou hast conquered me, evil construct!”

No reply. Thesis knew it had won.

I’d never be a real librarian. Never be taken seriously, and I was too exhausted to care. Whatever crap was spewed onto the page, whatever sorry excuse for sentence structure I allowed my drooling brain to tell my fingers to produce, I accepted. I accepted it all.

I went to drown my sorrows in pizza and “Supernatural” repeats, and sniffled pathetically from the couch so that Thesis might hear me and feel guilty.

I felt both sick with the inadequacy of it, and exhausted with the prospect of fixing it. What about the sparseness of the website I’d built? The fact that my literature review was only 15 pages, not 25? My IRB form had been submitted and approved, but I had no idea if I had filled it out correctly. What if I had actually slipped up and the whole thing was moot?

My rough draft and my final draft were identical. My appendixes were the most random collection of facts I could think to document with tables and graphs. But it was done.

When it came time to submit Thesis, I held my head up high and drew my courage and bravado around me like a freshman wearing a hoodie over and over again instead of doing laundry.

The topic wasn’t that inventive. The research wasn’t that deeply done. It was a pile of crap, and someone, anyone who wasn’t me, my parents, or my friends (all people contractually obligated to love me) was going to see that and fail me.

I took a picture of Thesis sitting in my professor’s inbox, feeling very much like the soon-to-be-executed enemy spy—found out to not belong in this land, and refusing the blindfold as the firing squad packed their powder. I high-fived the girl in the office, threw my shoulders back, and walked out with my jaw set and my career in the trash before it even started.

I got an A-. So um, yeah. Don’t agonize over it. Just get it done Padawan.

*Geek added for emphasis.

TALKING POINTS AND ICE BREAKERS TO HELP YOU MAKE FRIENDS THIS SUMMER

1. Man have you heard about the budget cuts? Deplorable.
2. I just wish people would realize ya lit goes so far beyond twilight
3. Have you seen the new millenium/illiad/ils? Man there are too many clicks!
4. Have you heard of this author? Yah I saw him at ALA last year. We’re totally bff now.
5. Isn’t Twitter revolutionizing librarianship?
6. Can you believe reporters were given limited access to the Gulf oil spill? Censorship!
7. Pre-literacy. Its important.



THE P-WORD

by Lena Marvin

Publish or perish, not just for professors, it's true for some academic librarians. I am one such librarian. I was recently hired as a government documents librarian at a college. After being asked what I wanted my legacy to be I've been pondering a plan regarding publication. I'm approaching this publishing predicament as a game. The most basic win condition is to publish, and to achieve tenure. Additional win conditions occur when the research preceding publication gives me an excuse to travel around the world visiting exotic places and fun conferences with free pens.

PRACTICALITY

Step one, find a bunch of journals I could, should, or may want to publish in.

Step two, analyze these journals, what they want, need, and how they work.

Step three, utilize things I've already written or already know to begin crafting content for these journals.

POSITIONING

It's easier to get into prestigious journals once you've become known in your academic research community, so, work on getting known (begin with less prestigious and work up).

Perhaps work jointly with awesome people so that our levels of awesome may combine and produce great work.

PASSION

I plan to publish not just to publish, but to present my passions, for it is easier to work on things I care about. I also hope to research things that push me to explore world concepts and the world as a place on globe trots.

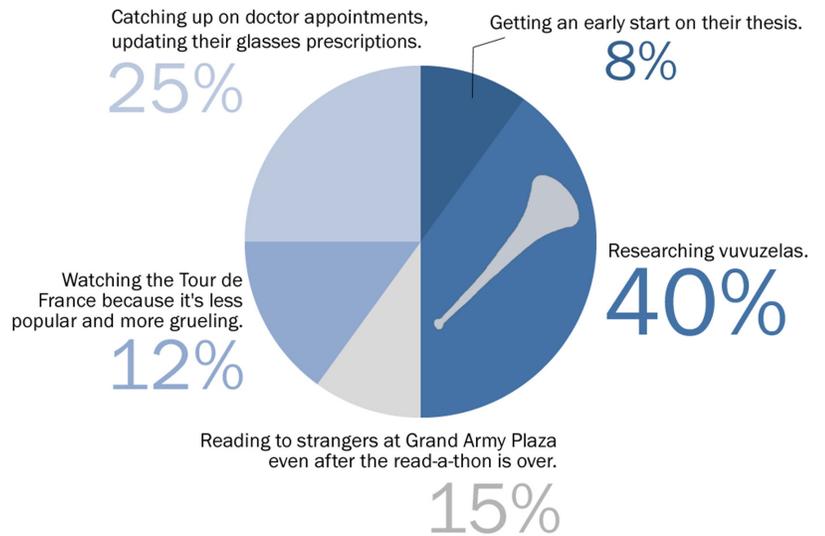
PERSONA

Most important to my exercise is, figure out who it is I want to be, and pretending to be that person.

I want to be a globetrotting librarian who takes time off to do research in far away lands on issues like piracy in education. The easiest way for this to happen, is if I pretend to be an up and coming globetrotting librarian who does research in far away lands.

This is the plethora of p-words I'm going to utilize so that I may publish instead of perish.

WHAT READERS HAVE BEEN UP TO THIS SUMMER



A Love Letter to Queens College GSLIS

Dear Queens College,

Lately I have been tearing my hair out over us. You have been so detached, so impassive, and I am sick of doing all the groundwork in our relationship. Sometimes, in relationships, both involved parties should step back and figure out what it is they're both after. You're the largest (big-boned) library school in New York. Which means less individual attention for students - i.e., me. Of your many flaws, the lack of student-teacher communication is maybe the most detrimental. You're also inconveniently located, and should really think about relocating to Brooklyn. Still, enrollment rates are up, and not only because of the low cost. Prospective students have heard about your Midtown Manhattan campus, where many are majoring in Joseph Murphy Institute.

We have to be honest with each other. That's why I feel like I should tell you that people are talking about you behind your back. Secretly, your library school's mantra is "it's the cheapest." This is not exactly an insult, even if it sounds like one. An aspiring librarian or archivist can get by in your program for under \$15,000. Not bad for a master's, even if library jobs are about as easy to find as an active card catalog. Queens GSLIS, it's time you took a look in the mirror, because you have some nice bone structure underneath that unbearable modesty.

The truth is, once I got to know you, I started to see the small things that make you, you. Like all the fireflies on campus summer nights and the comfort of finding a classmate to talk to on the Q64. Librarians-in-waiting haven't heard about the quality adjunct staffers teaching in your program, whose excitement about new media is contagious. Just last semester, I had two excellent professors with many years of experience. They got my desiccated brain romantizing what I might do if I could only get my hands on a library job. Students won't find information about staff or class descriptions online, though, because they're not available. On esims, "Staff" is a permanent fixture. We usually learn who our instructors are on the first day of class, when professors jump out of giant cakes made of recycled syllabi. Queens, our relationship needs a jumpstart. You may be handing out ALA accredited diplomas to some of the finest new librarians in the country, but you certainly wouldn't know that by looking on our website.

Love,
Natalie

CONTROLLED VOCABULARY:

Vitamin D, IRB, Vuvuzela, Viral, Joseph Murphy, Bogotá, Love, Publish, Perish, Justin Bieber.

